STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Kentucky's Writing Program: systematic approach to instructional ethics and professional development

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.645, KRS 158.6453, KRS 158.6458, KRS 158.770, KRS 158.775, 703 KAR 5:010, and 703 KAR 5:080

History/Background:

Existing Policy. KRS 158.6453 sets forth the statutory requirements for the design and components of Kentucky's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). Under this statute, the assessment program is to include an on-demand assessment of writing and writing portfolios consisting of samples of student work. This statute also required the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to develop regulations to address the reduction of teacher and student time in preparing portfolios. The statute specified that these strategies may include but are not limited to "limiting time spent on a single portfolio entry, limiting the number of revisions, or collecting entries at different grade levels." Based on this requirement, the KBE established 703 KAR 5:010, the administrative regulation to reduce time spent on portfolios, which outlined procedures to address reduction of student and teacher time in preparing and scoring the writing portfolio.

While instructing writing, teachers are also guided by 704 KAR 3:303, the *Program of Studies for Kentucky's Schools* and by 703 KAR 5:080, the Administration Code for Kentucky's Educational Assessment Program. 703 KAR 5:080 incorporates by reference the guidelines for writing instruction and for scoring writing portfolios.

Included in the *Kentucky Commonwealth Accountability Testing System Administration Guide* is a "Principal's Certification of Proper Test Administration" and a "District Assessment Coordinator's Certification of Proper Test Administration" (Attachments A and B). These certifications are signed during the spring to verify appropriate testing practices and inclusion of all students. At this time, neither certification form references appropriate writing portfolio development or writing portfolio scoring procedures.

Over the past year the KBE has continued discussions on the design of the 2007 assessment of writing, effective instructional practices that result in competent and accomplished writers, professional development for teachers and administrators on writing practices, improvement in the code of ethics to reduce inappropriate practices in the field and specific issues related to the instructional time spent on portfolios. KBE finalized their decisions on the 2007 design for the writing assessment at their June 2005

KBE meeting. The next areas of focus are to improve the practices outlined in the "Code of Ethics" with the goal of reducing inappropriate practices and to design high quality professional development to improve the instruction of writing and the use of effective instructional practices.

The purpose of this staff note is to provide the KBE with a revised draft of "Administration Guidelines for Writing Instruction" (Attachment C) and a proposed plan to deliver professional development on instructional guidelines to all Kentucky educators. This background information should provide the KBE with sufficient information to direct the work of the administration guide and Kentucky's systemic approach to ensuring instructional ethics.

Administration Guidelines
The contents of the "Code of Ethics" for writing exists within the "Administration Code for Kentucky's Educational Assessment Program" (703 KAR 5:080), and has been included as a separate document in the *Writing Development Teachers' Handbook* so that all teachers will better understand guidelines for writing portfolio production. Although writing cluster leaders receive annual training in scoring practices and annual reminders of instructional guidelines, it is unknown how that training is redelivered at the local level.

In order to help educators clearly understand how the *Program of Studies for Kentucky's Schools* (704 KAR 3:303), the administrative regulation to reduce time spent on portfolios (703 KAR 5:010), and the Administration Code for Kentucky's Educational Assessment Program (703 KAR 5:080) pertain to writing instruction, the "Administration Guidelines for Writing Instruction" was drafted (see Attachment C). An earlier version of this document was reviewed during the August 2005 KBE meeting. Since that time, a revised draft of that document has been reviewed by the state's Highly Skilled Educator cadre and has been shared with all District Assessment Coordinators. Highly Skilled Educators also participated in a review activity that can be replicated at their own schools.

The revised draft of the administration guidelines document more clearly indicates practices that are in violation of a regulation and will lead to allegations. The fourth column, "Examples of practices that are in violation," clearly identifies practices that violate current regulations and identifies the regulation code(s) so that teachers and administrators can easily identify supporting regulatory documents. It also indicates that all violations will be processed according to 703 KAR 5:080 (Attachment D).

Professional Development
In order to provide a systematic approach to the professional development of appropriate writing instruction, it is essential that the Kentucky Department of Education provide information through a variety of delivery venues as cited below:

1. Professional Study Components:
    a. The *Writing Development Teachers' Handbook,* currently available on the KDE web site, will be provided to all cluster leaders with a tool to guide a

school team through a professional study of the handbook. Because this handbook offers information in appropriate and ethical instruction, this professional study model will provide necessary information to teacher preparation programs and new educators and will reintroduce experienced educators to vital instructional material. Additional materials including the "Administration Guidelines" draft will also be provided. (September 2005)

    b. Questions that arise during study group conversations can be sent to KDE writing staff for response. Commonly asked questions will be included in the weekly Cluster Leader Electronic Messages that are sent to all schools from the KDE writing staff. Cluster leader messages will also highlight instructional practices and resources. (ongoing)

    c. KDE will request that KET air an <u>updated version</u> of the 1998 broadcast, *Ethical Marking of Student Work,* in order to remind educators of ethical practices in editing and revising. A print pack, including samples of student work, a power point presentation, and a quiz, will be provided for cluster leaders to use following the telecast. (September 2005)

2. Web Service: Upon agreement by the KBE, the "Administration Guidelines for Writing Instruction" will be posted to the KDE web site in an interactive form to enable educators to use the "Guidelines" while responding to instructional scenarios. As educators determine whether a scenario is in compliance with regulations and "appropriate for all," they will also receive immediate, electronic feedback and reminders of regulatory guidelines. (October 2005)

3. KET Telecasts:

    a. KDE Update to address ethical instruction: KDE leadership will provide a telecast to remind teachers of professional obligations to adhere to appropriate writing instruction. (October 2005)

    b. *How to Improve the Quality of Writing Conferences*: KDE will request that KET air an <u>updated version</u> of this broadcast in order to remind educators of appropriate conferencing practices. A print pack will be provided for cluster leaders to accompany the telecast. (October 2005)

4. Professional Development with follow-up: The Kentucky Writing Advisory Committee will deliver a New Cluster Leader training session throughout the state in addition to a training on the "Administration Guidelines for Writing Instruction" offered to all cluster leaders. Existing budget dollars are available for this purpose. (October-November 2005)

5. State Presentations:

    a. Highly Skilled Educators (August 22, 2005)

    b. District Assessment Coordinators (August 30, 2005)

    c. Kentucky Reading Association (September 23, 2005)

    d. Education Professional Standards Board and Deans of Education (September 29, 2005)

e. Kentucky's Instructional Support Network (October 13, 2005)
f. Kentucky Writing Project State Network (October 15, 2005)
g. Kentucky Association of Assessment Coordinators (October 24, 2005)
h. Ashland Community and Technical College's Fall Conference (October 28, 2005)
i. Exceptional Children's Conference (November 2005)
j. Kentucky Council for Teachers of English (February 2006)
k. Kentucky Leadership Academy (to be determined)
l. Educational Cooperatives (to be determined)
m. Exceptional Children Literacy Consultants (to be determined)

Policy Issue(s) and Options:

- What are the Kentucky Board of Education's suggested revisions regarding the draft recommendations for the Administration Guidelines for Writing Instruction and directions for dissemination of the Guidelines?
  - ➢ *KDE Recommendation:*
    Staff recommends that the Board direct KDE staff to proceed with implementation of the attached revised version of the Administration Guidelines for Writing Instruction and disseminate these through state meetings and conferences with educational stakeholders and partners, Cluster Leader Training and Materials, Cluster Leader Electronic Messaging System, KET programs, Kentucky Teacher, other appropriate print resources such as the District Assessment Coordinators Manual and the KDE website.

- Based on current guidelines, it is within regulatory compliance for schools to identify intern teachers as new cluster leaders. Does the Kentucky Board of Education concur with revision of 703 KAR 5:010, the administrative regulation to reduce time spent on portfolios, in order to create a "Leadership" component that will require schools to identify master teachers to serve as writing cluster leaders? (Master teachers are required to serve as coaches and mentors in various educational programs in Kentucky.)
  - ➢ *KDE Recommendation:*
    Staff recommends that the KBE revise 703 KAR 5:010 in order to create a "Leadership" component that will require schools to identify master teachers to serve as writing cluster leaders.

- 703 KAR 5:010 includes the current writing portfolio configuration. Does the Kentucky Board of Education concur with revising this regulation in order to update the portfolio configuration for the 2007 assessment?
  - ➢ *KDE Recommendation:*
    Staff recommends that the KBE revise 703 KAR 5:010 to update the portfolio configuration for the 2007 assessment.

- Neither the Principal's nor the District Assessment Coordinator's certifications of proper test administration reference writing instruction and scoring training. Does the

Kentucky Board of Education concur with revision of these documents in order to include language specific to the writing assessment? (Both documents reference the submission of score forms but do not include specific references to appropriate instruction and scoring procedures. Because these documents are signed during the spring, KDE will need to create a document that specifically references appropriate instructional practices to be signed in the fall.)

> *KDE Recommendation:*
> *Staff recommends revising the documents to include language specific to the writing assessment and create a document to be signed in the fall.*

- Does the Kentucky Board of Education concur with requiring that all teachers and administrators participate in locally conducted training on appropriate writing instruction and receive training on the "Administration Guidelines for Writing Instruction" on an annual basis? If so, should KDE develop a certification document similar to the spring testing certification that will verify by the principal's and district assessment coordinator's signature that the training has been completed? (All teachers and administrators are currently required to participate in locally conducted spring training annually about general testing practices, but they are not currently required to participate in a fall training annually that provides reminders of appropriate instructional practices relative to writing.)

> *KDE Recommendation:*
> *Staff recommends that all teachers and administrators be required to participate in a locally conducted fall training annually that provides reminders of appropriate instructional practices for writing and that a corresponding certification document be developed.*

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Writing instruction and program implementation must improve in all schools if students are to become proficient writers. Proficiency in other content areas also involves the student's ability to present an understanding and application of content knowledge. Although open-response questions are not scored according to writing criteria, a student who has the ability to formulate a written argument or explanation has a greater opportunity to receive high scores in all content areas.

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

- National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability: encouraged KDE to clarify appropriate instructional practices.
- Writing Focus Group: suggested that KDE encourage schools to review appropriate instructional practices on an annual basis; requested that training be made available for administrators.
- Office of Leadership and School Improvement (KDE): Highly Skilled Educators requested that regulation codes be included in the "Administration Guidelines" document.
- Office of Legal and Legislative Services (KDE): discussed the current types of

allegations that are placed on the writing assessment; indicated that the "Administration Guidelines" document will highlight practices that are in violation of the current guidelines and may initially increase the number of allegations reported to KDE.

- Office of Assessment and Accountability (KDE): District Assessment Coordinators recommended that KDE not use the terms "ethical" and "unethical" when discussing instructional practices; District Assessment Coordinators also suggested that KDE continue to clarify language regarding appropriate writing conferences.

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Deputy Commissioner   **Commissioner of Education**

Date:

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